

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 SP-02 ICA-11 AID-05 EB-08
NSC-05 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-07 OMB-01 CEA-01 COME-00
DOE-15 SOE-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
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R 030803Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1584
INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L KATHMANDU 1671

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, SENV, PBOR, SC, NP
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH KING BIRENDRA -- REGIONAL WATERS

REF: KATHMANDU 1670 (NOTAL)

1. DURING MY MARCH 28 MEETING WITH KING, SUBJECT OF REGIONAL WATERS CAME UP. NOTING THAT THERE CONTINUED TO BE INTEREST IN THIS MATTER IN NEPAL, I REMINDED KING THAT PRESENT U.S. GUIDELINES EXCLUDED LARGE CAPITAL PROJECTS OF THIS NATURE BUT AS PRESIDENT HAD STATED IN NEW DELHI, WE WERE INTERESTED IN SUBJECT AND AT SOME TIME MIGHT BE ABLE TO PLAY A USEFUL ROLE IN PROMOTING GENERAL CONCEPT OF MOBILIZING AREA'S WATER RESOURCES. AT PRESENT, QUESTION AROSE WHERE DO COUNTRIES CONCERNED GO FROM HERE?

2. KING TOOK UP QUESTION WITH INTEREST, SAYING THAT HE WOULD BE IN A BETTER POSITION TO ANSWER QUERY UPON COMPLETION OF A STUDY WHICH HE HAD JUST INITIATED WITHIN
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GOVERNMENT. HE SAID NEPAL WAS ENGAGED IN VARIETY OF WATER PROJECTS WITH INDIA AND DIFFERENT MINISTRIES WERE DEVELOPING DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO THIS COMPLICATED SUBJECT. HE HAD ASKED THAT NEPAL'S VARIOUS PLANS AND PROJECTS OVERALL STRATEGY WHICH WOULD HELP DETERMINE POLICY GON SHOULD ADOPT, BOTH IN BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS.

3. RECALLING VISIT OF DAVID HOPPER OF WORLD BANK
(KATHMANDU 1224) KING SAID HE HAD BEEN IMPRESSED BY HOPPER
AND WAS ENCOURAGED BY POSITIVE ATTITUDE WHICH HOPPER AND
PRESUMABLY WORLD BANK WERE TAKING ON THIS ISSUE AND SPECIFICALLY
ON KARNALI PROJECT. NEPAL AND INDIA CLEARLY HAD TO COME
TO VARIOUS AGREEMENTS BEFORE MATTER COULD BE
PUT TO WORLD BANK OR OTHER PARTIES, BUT HE
HOPED STUDY HE HAD REQUESTED WOULD HELP EXPEDITE DECISIONS
WITHIN HMG ON NEPAL'S BASIC INTERESTS IN THIS AND RELATED
PROJECTS. THIS IN TURN WOULD HOPEFULLY HELP MOVE ALONG
NEGOTIATIONS WITH INDIA. AT SOME POINT US MIGHT PLAY
HELPFUL ROLE AS BROKER. IF SO, HE WOULD LET US KNOW.

4. I THEN ASKED KING WHETHER DURING TENG HSIAO-P'ING'S
VISIT TO NEPAL HE HAD BEEN ABLE TO CLARIFY CHINESE
INTEREST IN REGIONAL WATERS QUESTION BEYOND WHAT TENG HAD
SAID PUBLICLY (KATHMANDU 683). KING SAID HE HAD
STRONG IMPRESSION THAT HIS INCLUSION OF CHINA IN HIS
COLOMBO PLAN ADDRESS AS ONE OF POWERS IN REGION
WHICH COULD PLAY A ROLE IN WATER DEVELOPMENT HAD
CAUGHT CHINESE BY SURPRISE. AT THIS POINT HE FELT CHINESE
WERE STUDYING THE MATTER AND UNTIL THEY
HAD COMPLETED THEIR EXAMINATION OF PROBLEM, THERE WAS
VERY LITTLE THAT WOULD BE FORTHCOMING FROM PEKING ON
THE SUBJECT. HE HOPED TO PURSUE MATTER DURING HIS
FORTHCOMING TRIP TO CHINA.
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5. COMMENT: THIS WAS FIRST CONFIRMATION I HAD RECEIVED
OF RUMORS THAT HE WAS CONSIDERING TRIP TO CHINA IN NEAR
FUTURE.

6. FURTHER COMMENT: KING'S INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS
ADVISORS AND EXPERTS TO COME UP WITH A NEPALESE
POLICY ON USE OF ITS WATER RESOURCES IS A USEFUL STEP
FORWARD. IN ITS DISCUSSIONS AND NEGOTIATIONS WITH INDIA
AND OTHERS TO DATE, GON HAS BEEN SENSITIVE TO PROTECTING
ITS NATIONAL INTERESTS WITHOUT HAVING CLEAR DEFINITION
OF WHAT THEY WERE. DEVELOPMENT OF OVERALL STRATEGY AND
POLICY WILL TAKE TIME BUT IN LONG RUN COULD BE WORTHWHILE
EXERCISE IN PROVIDING NEPALESE WITH BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF
WHAT THEIR OWN INTERESTS ARE AND WHERE THEY SHOULD COME
OUT IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH INDIA AND IN MULTILATERAL
FORA ON THIS COMPLEX SUBJECT.
HECK

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